

Domestic Volunteer Tourism Demand in Slovakia

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Abstract

The aim is to explore and evaluate the aggregate demand of the Slovak population for domestic volunteer tourism. The answers from 573 questionnaire respondents older than 15 years, selected by convenient sampling, were processed establishing a representative image of the Slovak population in terms of age and gender. The findings show an average 3-4% of the population participating in domestic volunteer tourism in Slovakia per year. While participation declines with age, it increases with higher education. The research confirmed that the volunteer tourism could be perceived as a combination of travel and volunteering not only in developing countries, but also in developed ones. It was also found that domestic volunteer tourism in Slovakia partly copies the development of volunteer tourism abroad and has the potential to grow. The demand of Slovak residents for domestic volunteer tourism is significant, and therefore, it is necessary to properly respond with consistent coordination of supply.

Keywords: Volunteer Tourism, Domestic Voluntourism, Voluntourist, Demand

Citation: Pompurová, K., Sokolová, J. and Cole, D. (2020). Domestic Volunteer Tourism Demand in Slovakia. *European Journal of Tourism Research* 25, 2509.



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Introduction

Volunteer tourism, also known as “voluntourism” within the industry, is one of the most vibrant forms of alternative tourism (Hammersley, 2014; Kontogeorgopoulos, 2017; McIntosh & Zahra, 2007; Miller & Mair, 2015; Proyrungroj, 2017, 2020). As Lyons & Wearing (2008) claims, volunteer tourism produces experiences that transfer the goals of tourism towards something that will enhance social, cultural, and ecological value of local environments and societies. The vast majority of authors explore volunteer tourism in the form of international volunteering. This alternative form of tourism has been advanced in developing countries, which greatly profit from international volunteers. Foreign volunteer tourism thus has a dominant position in the voluntary tourism market from the perspective of practice and the interest of scholars as well. Most often, they focus on development and environmental volunteer activities in less developed countries, whose culture is considerably different from that of the voluntourists (Wearing & Grabowski, 2011; Wearing & McGehee, 2013). However, the view of volunteer tourism as an arrangement of traveling and volunteering in developing countries is insufficient. A group of authors (Holmes & Smith, 2009; Holmes *et al.*, 2010; Lyons & Wearing, 2012) are therefore expanding volunteer tourism in their own country. They are of the opinion that participants in domestic volunteer tourism should also be considered as equally important. They are active in the country of their usual residence. For Central European countries, there is a sense of coming into one's own as these countries have successfully transitioned into vibrant economies. With this transformation, there is a sense of duty to society that was rather lacking in the transitional years of the 1990's.

This research addresses the question of if there is a solid demand for domestic volunteer tourism in Slovakia in Central Europe, and in what direction it is moving. Since no attention is paid to volunteer tourism in Slovakia, the aim of this research is to explore and evaluate the aggregate demand of the Slovak population for domestic volunteer tourism. The authors believe that more studies on domestic volunteer tourism demand should be initiated because of their findings and have ambition to contribute to the knowledge of this alternative form of tourism upon realising a gap in the domestic volunteer tourism literature.

Theoretical background in domestic volunteer tourism

Volunteer tourism is a combination of two basic elements – volunteerism and tourism (Figure 1).

While Holmes and Smith (2009), Hustinx, Handy and Cnaan (2010) and Pereira *et al.* (2008), highlighted the link between volunteerism and tourism, Butcher and Smith (2010), Gray and Campbell (2007), Kass (2013), Lyons and Wearing (2008), Uriely *et al.* (2003), Wearing (2001), Wearing and McGehee (2013), found that tourism development is beginning to provide concrete definitions of volunteer tourism. It is difficult to determine which area has the most influence – volunteerism or tourism. Both have a history, shaping their mission, both externally and internally and the impact of globalization has made them interdisciplinary. Volunteer tourism has a demonstrably positive impact on the development of the community and on the volunteers themselves. At the same time, it contributes to the development of the destination and reflects the principles of responsible travel. We consider an important differentiation between volunteerism and tourism the element of travel. This is even true with volunteering within a country, as there is a definite link between volunteerism and tourism at the national level. While volunteers in tourism contribute to the development of tourism in their place of residence, voluntourists travel to take part in domestic volunteer tourism. Therefore, we are in favour of the opinion of the second group of authors with the understanding that volunteer tourism is a new distinct type of tourism.

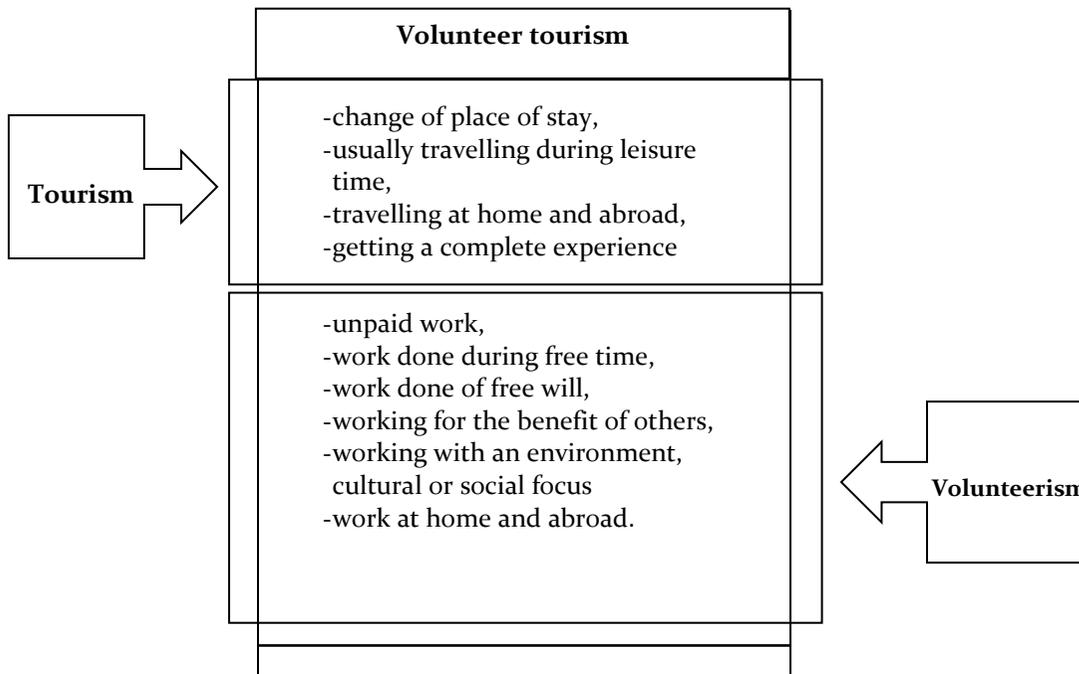


Figure 1. *The main features of volunteering and tourism*

In this context, we can define a voluntourist as an individual who, in free time, meets the specific need of traveling in order to gain a comprehensive experience, and engages voluntarily, without a claim and reward in various voluntary activities while staying at a destination (outside usual residence). This definition of participant has some differences from the generally recognized Wearing (2001) definition. The first difference is the characteristics of the basic features of the volunteer, i.e. own initiative and of free choice, with no expectation of rewards or benefit to one's self. We regard these as key in relation to the correct definition of volunteering. We also note that, although Wearing's definition (2001) applies to voluntourists in general, it relates to a participation in foreign volunteer tourism. The subject of voluntary activity in the Wearing definition does not explicitly capture specific areas of activities of domestic volunteer tourism. While its participants can join in volunteering activities along with foreign voluntourist as well as volunteers in tourism, the question arises about when it is volunteering with tourism and when it is social work. In the case of foreign volunteer tourism, this distinction is clear, as the element of travel based on the idea of learning new cultures and regions of the world is quite clear. Looking at this polemic from a geographical point of view, the interconnection of voluntary activities of domestic and foreign volunteer tourism is predominantly in countries that are federated states (such as Australia and the United States of America). In the case of smaller countries, including Slovakia, it is, in our opinion, important to specify the areas of activity of domestic volunteer tourism and to link the focus of activities more with tourism. Voluntary activities of tourism volunteering, which Holmes and Smith (2009) focus on and in the case of a host volunteering, are also relevant to domestic volunteer tourism. In addition to event volunteering, voluntary activities in tourist attractions and voluntary activities in organizations providing services in tourism, it is also possible, based on empirical evidence, to supplement volunteering in residential camps, a trip connected to voluntary activity and a stay in a target place with voluntary activity.

Consequently, we can characterize domestic volunteer tourism as a way of using leisure time, which combines a change of habitual residence in order to gain a comprehensive experience (through consumption of tourism goods) with voluntary activities especially in tourists' attractions, in tourism service organizations, at organised events and residential camps. In so doing, they bring economic-, social-, and environment-related benefits not only to the community and the environment, but also to the voluntourist.

Volunteer tourism can be classified from different points of view. In particular, it can be based on predominant elements (e.g. Holmes & Smith, 2009); the age of the participants (e.g. Callanan & Thomas, 2005; Schiekkel, 2008); the number of participants (e.g. Palacios, 2010; TRAM, 2008); length of participation (eg Callanan & Thomas, 2005; TRAM, 2008); and also geographical location (eg Holmes *et al.*, 2010; Uriel *et al.*, 2003).

Volunteer tourism includes a wide range of voluntary activities; foreign (international) volunteer tourism projects received the greatest attention from the authors. They examine them by category (focus) (e.g. Benson, 2011; Broad & Jenkins, 2008; Campbell & Smith, 2006; Coghlan, 2007; Hindle *et al.*, 2010; Ingram, 2011; Kaminski *et al.*, 2011; Lyons & Wearing, 2008; Sin, 2010; TRAM, 2008; Wearing, 2001). Other authors focus on volunteer-leisure ratio (e.g. Brown & Morison, 2003; Lamoureux, 2011), project type (e.g. Raymond, 2011), depth of project integrity (e.g. Callanan & Thomas, 2005), commitment levels that participants demonstrate in a selected project or its impact on the local community (e.g. Ong, Logstone-Binney & King, 2014). The types of voluntary activities of domestic volunteer tourism form a low-profile topic in literature.

One of the issues most elaborated on in literature is the motivation to participate in volunteer tourism. The authors examine the motivation from a push/pull framework (e.g. Crompton 1979; Proyrungroj, 2020); altruistic/non-altruistic framework (e.g. Wearing 2004; Webb, 2002); personal, interpersonal motivation (e.g. L. J. Chen & Chen, 2011); volunteer and travel combination (e.g. Brown, 2005); terms of typology of voluntary activity (e.g. Sokolová & Žofaj, 2017); or explore individual motivation with combinations of different factors (e.g. Callan & Thomas, 2005; Ingram, 2011). The results of the surveys are a relatively wide range of motives that influence participation in voluntary tourism, as well as the choice of its form and types of voluntary activities. As Proyrungroj (2020) argues, the volunteer tourists are not likely to be motivated by a single motivation, but rather, a combination of motivations where both push and pull-, altruistic and egoistic motives are present and playing an important role in the final decision-making process of the volunteer tourists.

Differences in motive structure are also in the selection of international or domestic voluntary activities. While foreign volunteer tourism enthusiasts are particularly attracted by the offerings of an organization (meaningfulness, responsibility of individual projects) and the ability to "escape" everyday duties and stereotypes, participants in domestic volunteer tourism are more motivated by the desire to enjoy the environment, meet other volunteers, get a perceive new experience and to use their free time meaningfully (Holmes *et al.*, 2010; Mody *et al.*, 2014). In other words, local volunteer tourists desire to gain inner happiness. As Proyrungroj (2020) have further found out, for foreign volunteer tourists, the attributes of the destination were also significant. Selected destination should also satisfy their needs for leisure activities because foreign volunteer tourists also wanted to enjoy the prettiness of the place as conventional tourists when they were free from volunteer work (Proyrungroj, 2020). Participants in domestic volunteer tourism who participate in voluntary projects or activities related to cultural, natural attractions and artificially created attractions (e.g. zoos) are motivate primarily by personal interest in history and the environment, the possibility of interaction

with new people (volunteers and visitors), the desire to obtain a future vocation and the opportunity to develop their own potential. They see volunteering as an opportunity to escape from the everyday stereotype. Participants in volunteer tourism who engage in the activities of tourism service organizations perceive motivation to meet new people, are proud of their home country and want to use their knowledge to benefit them, help visitors and at the same time gain new experiences (Holmes & Smith, 2009).

The professional literature pays little attention to the obstacles to participation in volunteer tourism. For example, some theorists (e.g. Cleave & Doherty, 2005; Holmes, 2008; Human & Van Graan, 2013; Trafford Council, 2011) have identified a significant barrier of language, lack of communication from the sending organization, distance to the destination, fear of unknown diseases, great diversity from the host community culture, non-acceptance by the community and the financial difficulty of the selected activity. The authors also state that potential participants are afraid of accountability, lack of experience and flexibility, worrying that the assigned work will not be their liking and the negative perceived distance to the destination. The most important obstacle is the lack of time.

Methodology

To collect data on the aggregate demand for volunteer tourism in Slovakia, a sociological survey was realised. Data were gathered through structured questionnaire, addressed to the entire population of Slovakia regardless of the relationship with volunteer tourism, and collected during October and December 2018.

Considering the nature of our intention, we consider this method to be an appropriate method. While some authors work with the results of a questionnaire survey (e.g. Otoo, 2013; Rattan, 2009), most authors (e.g. Chen & Chen, 2011; McIntosh & Lo & Lee, 2010; Wearing, 2001; Zahra, 2007) favoured semi-structured interviews. Their advantage is that they penetrate more deeply into the problem and allow for unique results. The disadvantage is that they do not contain a large number of respondents and are more time consuming. We would recommend this method for future exploration of selected aspects of domestic volunteer tourism separately (e.g. only motivation, obstacles, the structure of voluntary activities, etc.).

The sample size used in a study was determined based on the time, costs and the need for it to offer sufficient statistical power. The convenience sampling was applied, which is quick and easy to deliver results. The questionnaire designed for the survey was consulted several times with sociologists and statistical experts and has been structured in four blocks - previous experiences with volunteer tourism, potential demand, obstacles to participation, socio-demographic characterizations. The questionnaire was distributed mostly electronically via social media and emails, the target group of seniors were addressed in person, largely in senior clubs. Of the 703 responses, 27 were completed incorrectly and were excluded. Subsequently, after evaluating the representativeness of the file in question by Pearson's Chi-square test for quality, 103 questionnaires were randomly removed in order to bring the sample closer to the age and gender structure of the Slovak population ($\chi^2_{\text{gender}}=0.389$, $p=0.533$; $\chi^2_{\text{age}}=9.290$, $p=0.054$). The final sample consists of 573 respondents (Table 1).

We set the research criteria distance of 15 km for participating in voluntary activity from habitual residence (a range of intercity transport or highway driving). In examining the motivation to participate in volunteer tourism, we focus on two main components of motivation, namely the motives typical of volunteering (e.g. Esmond & Dunlop, 2004) and the motives typical of tourism (e.g. Gúčik, 2010; Mody *et al.*, 2014; Šimková & Holzner 2014; Bozic *et al.*, 2017). The main motives consisted

of 11 partial motives, which the respondent rated on a scale with 1-totally disagree to 5-totally disagree. Cronbach's alpha (motives typical of tourism - 0.799; motives typical of volunteering - 0.65; total - 0.757) confirmed the acceptable internal consistency and reliability of the research tool. As such, it was not necessary to modify the structure of the sub-motives. The same results were obtained by examining barriers to participating in domestic volunteer tourism, where Cronbach's alpha (0.87) confirmed the internal consistency as well.

Table 1. *Socio-Economic characteristic of respondents*

Characteristic	All respondents		Domestic voluntourists	
	N	%	N	%
Gender				
Male	278	48.52	76	60.80
Female	295	51.48	49	39.20
<i>Total</i>	<i>573</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>125</i>	<i>100.00</i>
Age				
16-17	17	2.97	6	4.80
18-24	71	12.39	19	15.20
25-29	84	14.66	28	22.40
30-34	53	9.25	12	9.60
35-39	70	12.22	9	7.20
40-44	55	9.60	4	3.20
45-49	44	7.68	14	11.20
50-54	47	8.20	14	11.20
55-59	45	7.85	11	8.80
60 <	87	15.18	8	6.40
<i>Total</i>	<i>573</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>125</i>	<i>100.00</i>
Economical status				
Student	90	15.71	34	27.20
Employed	270	47.12	54	43.20
Unemployed	14	2.44	4	3.20
Self-Employed	85	14.83	20	16.00
Maternity Leave	26	4.54	4	3.20
Retiree	88	15.36	9	7.20
<i>Total</i>	<i>573</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>125</i>	<i>100.00</i>
Education level				
Primary	47	8.21	11	8.80
Secondary	268	46.77	49	39.20
University	257	44.85	65	52.00
None	1	0.17	0	0.00
<i>Total</i>	<i>573</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>125</i>	<i>100.00</i>

Data were analysed by selected mathematical-statistical methods. Descriptive statistic but also inductive reasoning was used with taking sample from a larger population and using that data to draw conclusions.

Findings

More than 21% of respondents had been involved in domestic volunteer tourism during last years (2013-2018). With the help of statistical induction, we can state that in the last years, domestic volunteer tourism in Slovakia was attended by 18 to 25 percent of Slovaks over 15 years of age (with 95% confidence in the interval for mean: lower bound=0.18; upper bound=0.25, Std. error=0.017). That means on average 3-4% a year. The Spearman correlation coefficient showed weak to moderate age-related dependence ($r_s = -0.172$; $p = 0.001$) and mild to moderate direct dependence with the highest individual attainment ($r_s = 0.143$; $p = 0.001$). As the age increases, the participation of Slovakia's population in domestic volunteer tourism decreases slightly, however, with higher levels of education, their participation increased slightly.

In the period under review, respondents as participants in domestic volunteer tourism were most often involved in organized events (40.3%) followed by residential camps (37.8%) and projects (20.1%). From the point of view of focus, the largest projects were renewal projects, respectively preservation of natural attractions in Slovakia (47.3%), short-term primary (volunteer) projects, activities and events dominated with an average duration of 2-3 days. Only in the case of residential camps was the mean time horizon (Table 2) with an average duration of 6-7 six days.

Table 2. Classification of voluntary activities of domestic volunteer tourism

Classification	Number of projects		Number of other activities		Number of events		Number in camps	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
By Category								
-	30	32.97						
Restoration/Preservation Of Cultural Attractions			-	-	-	-	-	-
-	43	47.25						
Restoration/Preservation Of Natural Attractions			-	-	-	-	-	-
-Other Projects	18	19.78	-	-	-	-	-	-
According to the ratio of volunteer and leisure activities								
Primary (volunteer)	63	69.23	5	62.50	120	65.93	123	71.93
Secondary (holiday)	19	20.88	3	37.50	55	30.22	35	20.47
Neutral (combined)	9	9.89	0	0.00	7	3.85	13	7.60
By duration								
Short term	67	73.63	8	100.00	157	86.26	69	40.35
Medium term	24	26.37	0	0.00	24	13.19	102	59.65
Long term	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.55	0	0.00

Note: Some respondents participated in several activities during the period under review.

Respondents received information on opportunities to participate in domestic volunteer tourism through direct rather than indirect information sources (Table 3). Up to 42.4% of respondents received information from two or more sources. Although the mix of resources was varied, a combination of two direct sources prevailed in 45.3%.

Table 3. Sources of information about domestic volunteer tourism

Source of information		N	% ^a	N	%
Direct source	- from friends / acquaintances	89	43,63	154	75,49
	- from a family member	31	15,20		
	- at school, lectures, or in class	12	5,88		
	- at school from classmates	7	3,43		
	- contact by an organization (church, club, AIESEC, etc.)	7	3,43		
	at work	6	2,94		
	- own experience	2	0,98		
Indirect source	- via social network (advert or a post)	17	8,33	50	24,51
	- searched for information on the internet	16	7,84		
	- read an article about volunteering	7	3,43		
	- own initiative, interested in the field	3	1,47		
	- at school; a flyer/poster on the bulletin board	2	0,98		
	- from television; a show about volunteering	2	0,98		
	- from internet advertising	2	0,98		
	- from radio; a programme about volunteering	1	0,49		
Total				204	100,00

Note: Respondents had the opportunity to make multiple responses. The sum of the answers is therefore higher than the number of respondents who participated in voluntary tourism.

^a share of the number of participants in domestic voluntary tourism.

The motivation for tourism as well as for volunteering also needs to be explored which is constantly influenced by current developments in the world, changes in lifestyle or values of society. Respondents perceive the altruistic notion of helping others (59.0%) as a primary reason for volunteering, but at the same time volunteerism is for them an opportunity to gain new experiences (49.6%) and brings a sense of purpose to one's life (33.1%) (Table 4). We note that participation in domestic volunteer tourism is mainly influenced by motives typical for volunteering. The Friedman test ($F=19.2$; $p=0.001$) as well as the Wilcoxon signed ranks test ($W=-5,246$; $p=0.000$) confirmed these conclusions and determined that there was a statistically significant difference between the motives examined.

The potential demand is crucial for the development of domestic volunteer tourism and we found that interest in participating for the home country to be 64.9%. With the help of statistical induction, we can state that 61 to 69% of Slovaks over 15 years of age (with 95% confidence in the interval for mean: lower bound=0.61; upper bound=0.69, Std. error=0.015) showed interest in volunteer tourism in Slovakia in the future. The contrast with the percentage of individuals with previous personal experience in 2013-2018 is obvious. Although we admit that there may be a difference between what people are saying and doing (lower validity of responses), we can say that there is scope for volunteer tourism growth in the Slovak market. This output provides useful information for both non-profit organisations, business and promoter of volunteer tourism.

Table 4. *Motives for participation in domestic volunteer tourism*

Main motives	Sub motives ^a	Average value ^b	Rank ^d	Mean rank (Friedman) ^c	Wilcoxon signed ranks test ^d
Motives typical of tourism	More affordable travel	3.10	3	1.69	W=-5.246 (p=0.000)
	A safe destination	2.92	3		
	No language barrier and cultural shock	2.70	3		
	Enjoying free time with friends	2.15	2		
	Getting new experiences	1.65	1		
Motives typical of volunteering	I feel it is important to help others	1.61	1	1.31	
	What I give back	2.21	2		
	Feeling useful	1.68	1		
	Opportunity to use and develop work skills	2.13	2		
	People I know are also doing this	2.60	3		
	Gaining new contacts and friends	1.90	1		

^a The questionnaire items report agreement [on a scale of 1 (Extremely likely) to 5 (Extremely unlikely)].

^b Descriptive statistic shows results only for the researched file.

^c To generalize results for Slovak population, Friedman test was used. It compares the mean ranks between the related groups and indicates how the groups differed.

^d As Friedman test does not express if there are statistical differences between the researched items (mean rank values), the Wilcoxon test were used to express this. The significance values produced by SPSS Statistics were manually compared. At the $p < 0.05$ significance level, only three ranks were statistically significantly different.

We were also interested in what discouraged respondents from participating in domestic volunteer tourism as well. When generalizing the results of the Friedman test baseline ($F=74.2$; $p = 0.001$) and the subsequent Wilcoxon signed ranks test ($p < 0.05$), there were no statistically significant differences between the obstacles examined. They were only arranged in two consecutive steps (Table 5).

We can say that the structure of obstacles to participation in domestic volunteer tourism in Slovakia is very broad. With increasing age ($r_s = 0.488$; $p < 0.001$) and falling education ($r_s = -0.226$; $p = 0.006$), the perception of leisure time is more sensitive, especially for employed respondents. In the other obstacles examined, the relationship with highest educational attainment and the current economic status of the respondents was significant. Secondary-educated people prefer a different type of travel in Slovakia as they are more worried that they do not have enough experience to carry out volunteer activities and are more likely to re-evaluate the financial and distant side of volunteer tourism.

Table 5. *Obstacles to participation in domestic volunteer tourism*

Obstacles ^a	Average value ^b	Mean rank (Friedman) ^c	Ranking based on Wilcoxon signed ranks test ^d
Lack of time	2.02	4.28	1
Lack of information about possibilities	2.50	5.31	1
I'm not interested in volunteering	2.25	5.16	1
I'm not interested in this kind of travel in Slovakia	2.45	5.65	1
Lack of experience	2.60	5.35	1
Fear of being assigned activities that I don't find interesting	2.73	5.78	1
Concern for needing to carry out responsible activities	3.07	6.54	2
High financial costs associated with volunteering	2.55	5.40	1
Prefer to donate rather than volunteer	2.79	6.06	1
Distance of the project organization / activity / event	2.58	5.46	1

^aThe questionnaire items report agreement [on a scale of 1 (Extremely likely) to 5 (Extremely unlikely)].

^bDescriptive statistic shows results only for the researched file.

^cTo generalize results for Slovak population, Friedman test was used. It compares the mean ranks between the related groups and indicates how the groups differed.

^dAs Friedman test does not express if there are statistic differences between the researched items (mean rank values), the Wilcoxon test were used to express this. The significance values produced by SPSS Statistics were manually compared. At the $p < 0.05$ significance level, only two ranks were statistically significantly different.

Discussion

The vast majority of authors explore volunteer tourism at the level of international volunteering. Most often, they focus on development and environmental volunteering activities in less developed countries. The perception, however, of volunteer tourism as a combination of travel and volunteering only in developing countries is insufficient. The article is therefore focused on exploring domestic volunteer tourism in the example of Slovakia. As domestic volunteer tourism is mentioned in only a few literature sources (e.g. Holmes & Smith, 2009), we compare the results of our research with surveys of foreign volunteer tourism (e.g. Brown, 2005; Callan & Thomas, 2005; Stoddart, Rogerson, 2004; TRAM, 2008; Wearing, 2001) and surveys of volunteering in Slovakia (Brozmanová-Gregorová *et al.*, 2012, 2018).

The demand for domestic volunteer tourism in Slovakia is borne by all its inhabitants, both men and women and in all age groups. At the same time, we confirm Callan and Thomas (2005) that volunteer tourism involves both pupils attending secondary schools and seniors with different age groups having different priorities and experiences.

One of the first foreign studies conducted by Wearing (2001), as well as the later study, TRAM (2008), have shown that, from a demographic point of view, young people aged between 18 and 25 are predominantly involved in volunteer tourism, with more women (70%) than men. Holmes and Smith (2009) point to similar results. However, they note that older participants in volunteer tourism are an important segment, especially in the "Gap Year Volunteering" and Volunteer Vacation (Holmes &

Smith, 2009). In the 35-45 age group, which can be described as the second most important target group, families with children are emerging as a growing family status segment and employees' volunteering is at the forefront of economic status. This is evidenced by the wide range of volunteer tourism projects of well-known broadcasting organizations (e.g. International VolunteerHQ, United Planet, Global Vision International, Camps International). The third target group in the foreign volunteer tourism market is older than 50 (Stoddart, Rogerson, 2004). Thanks to their free time and experience, they have become a target group for International VolunteerHQ, Peace Corps, Projects Abroad, Global Vision International, Love Volunteers and others. Our survey shows some differences. Domestic volunteer tourism in Slovakia was mostly attended by men aged 25 to 29 with a university education. With an increased age, the participation of Slovakia's population is falling slightly. On the contrary, with the growing education of the Slovak population, their participation is slightly increasing. The second largest group is the population aged 18-24 and the third is 30-34 and 40-44. The smallest representation was recorded for the population aged 55-59. When comparing the survey results with the study of volunteering in Slovakia (Brozmanová-Gregorová *et al.*, 2012) we state that the direct correlation between the level of education and the engagement of the population in both areas was confirmed.

Our survey has shown that Slovak citizens, as participants in domestic volunteer tourism, participated most frequently in organized events and residential camps related to the restoration and preservation of natural and cultural objects while the least involvement were related to traditional tourist attractions, such as guides to cultural attractions. We could conclude that this sort of activity is usually performed by qualified employees in Slovakia. A survey of volunteering in Slovakia (Brozmanová-Gregorová *et al.*, 2012) shows that for the population of Slovakia volunteering is generally attractive in the area of environment, art and culture. Various domestic and foreign campaigns aimed at raising awareness of responsible, ecological behaviour in tourism also encourage interest in environmental voluntary activities. This gives participants the opportunity to take action of conscious with concerns of environmental issues. We suppose that volunteering at cultural events has a significant position in the field of art and culture. In domestic surveys conducted by Pompurová, Marčeková (2016) or Pompurová, Šimočková and Valihorová (2017) documents that these types of activities have a strong position in Slovakia.

The latest volunteering survey in Slovakia, which focused on the target youth group (Brozmanová-Gregorová *et al.*, 2018), points out that the presumption of gradual conversion of traditional volunteering in Slovakia towards a new style is being fulfilled. The new style of volunteering differs from the traditional in several dimensions. For example, it is characterized by short-term, instability, disconnection, higher participation of people with university education, and so on. We can say that these characteristics are closely related to that of volunteering at organized events, which have proven to be most attractive to participants in the domestic volunteer area. The results of the prospective inquiry show that developments are unlikely to change in the near future.

In view of the studied types of voluntary activities, we note that the results of the survey are identical to those of Holmes & Smith (2009). Voluntary activities predominate with a primary (voluntary) character, but with a short duration of on average two to three days. When exploring the motives for participation in Slovakia, we have chosen a partially different methodology, such as Brown (2005). When comparing results, we could use the terminology of the author to mark the participants of domestic volunteer tourism in Slovakia as being volunteer-minded. The research showed the prevalence of motives typical of volunteering, however, such an application is debatable, as the types of volunteer activities studied, as well as the destination of their organization, are different. The

research showed that respondents perceive the motive of helping others as being the most important but at the same time, it is an opportunity to gain new experiences, contacts, friendships, and gain a sense of usefulness. This finding is concurrent with Proyrungroj (2020). The structure of voluntary motives differs marginally from the survey of volunteer motivation in Slovakia (Brozmanová-Gregorová *et al.* 2012), although the most significant motive is the same.

Conclusion

We focused on exploring domestic volunteer tourism in Slovakia. 18 to 25% of Slovak population over 15 years has attended domestic volunteer tourism in Slovakia between 2013 and 2018; it means 3-4 % a year. Although this percentage may seem overvalued in comparison with special interest tourism studied from the past (McKercher & Chan, 2005), we consider it as real in the context of increasing interest of individuals in active and meaningful use of free time. It includes both one-day trips and shorter or longer stays in domestic tourism, which are often not included in the accommodation statistics due to the nature of the accommodation of the volunteers. We are convinced that the importance of niche tourism is growing. With rising age, the participation in domestic volunteer tourism slightly decreased while participation increased slightly with younger and educated citizens. Despite the domestic market for volunteer tourism being rather fragmented and opaque, we rate positively the level of involvement of the Slovak population as well as their interest in various types of activities. There are numerous projects where the gains from volunteer tourism have been incalculable in terms of benefit to society. The efforts from voluntourists have helped to save important cultural artefacts in Slovakia. With their preservation, these sites have now become actual tourist destinations in themselves creating economic benefits for the local citizens. Throughout Slovakia, there exist many objects that could be targeted for volunteer tourism. This is especially true of the rural areas where these artefacts can be found in abundance.

The research confirmed that this alternative form of tourism could be perceived as a combination of travel and volunteering not only in developing countries, but also in developed ones. We can say that domestic volunteer tourism in Slovakia partly copies the development of volunteer tourism abroad and has the potential to grow. Moreover, the research results show that domestic volunteer tourism has a meanful position in the voluntary tourism market and thus it deserves more attention in theory and practice. In practice, it is necessary to pay attention to the consolidation and visibility of supply. The limit of the survey is the relatively small sample of respondents and the absence of comparable surveys abroad. In the future, we call for further surveys of domestic volunteer tourism in other countries and for more detailed qualitative studies in Slovakia and abroad.

Acknowledgment: This research is supported by the VEGA project no. V-18-101-07-101312: Abandoned Slovakia: Effective solutions to the creative reuse of abandoned properties in non-urban areas

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Received: 25/07/2019

Accepted: 16/12/2019

Coordinating editor: Stanislav Ivanov